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AUTHOR Russell, Susan S.; Hanf, Betty
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ABSTRACT

The lack of proximity to large information centers combined with limited budgets, resources, and expertise prompted the special libraries of Berks County, Pennsylvania, to attempt a network for interlibrary sharing. Information specialists from large an small industrial, medical, and public resource centers organized and operated a network of information resources. In 1968 the usefulness of the network was evaluated by the use of a questionnaire. A list of members of the Special Libraries of Berks County network and a copy of the by-laws of the Library Group Southwestern Connecticut are appended. (Author/DS)

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INTERLIBRARY COOPERATION: A COUNTY-WIDE NETWORK

by

Susan S. Russell
Gilbert Associates, Inc.

and

Betty Hanf
Crompton & Knowles, Inc., Dyes and Chemicals Division
Reading, Pennsylvania

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

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AUTHORS: Susan S. Russell (Gilbert Associates, Inc.)
Betty Hanf (Crompton & Knowles, Inc., Dyes and Chemicals Division)

ABSTRACT:

Lack of proximity to large information centers and limited library budgets, resources, and expertise caused the varied Special Libraries of Berks County, Pa. to attempt a network of interlibrary sharing for mutual benefit.

This paper is a discussion of the organization and operation by these information people from large and small, industrial, medical, and public resource centers for institution of a network of information resources.

Berks County, Pa. is located in the southeastern part of the state in a predominantly rural area. Centered around the county seat, Reading (pop. 87,643), is a majority of the varied industrial activities of the county. Within this area lie textile mills, paper and steel converters, chemical, paint, and alloy manufacturers, machine works, architectural and engineering firms, utilities, three hospitals, two nursing schools, a state college, the Berks Campus of the Pennsylvania State University, two liberal arts colleges and a community college.

Logistics has repeatedly presented a problem for the Special Librarians of Berks, for although Reading is fortunate in having colleges nearby, the librarians' need has grown for specific and detailed information available at larger institutions, such as Drexel University, the University of Pennsylvania, Lehigh University, and the main campus of the Pennsylvania State University. These information centers are at least 1½ hours away by auto for the Berks Special Librarian. Additionally, there is only one U. S. Depository Library, the Reading Public Library, and this library is unable to hold all depository documents or even all those of interest to its varied industrial community.

There exists a great need, then, for materials too far away for ready use, too detailed for local holdings, for information needed rarely, and for personal contacts - "I know somebody who...". With several members of the Special Libraries of Berks County going to Philadelphia at least once a week to attend library classes at Drexel University, more material becomes available more quickly than by mail. Because of the very varied backgrounds of the membership itself, many, many materials are available locally if the Information Centers/Libraries could cooperate. The special libraries' dependence upon the Reading Public Library is great and, as a result, it is imperative that a good working relationship be maintained with an already overworked staff, not necessarily financed by all the Special Libraries of the county. (Berks County does not pay its "fair share" of the Reading Library's support, but demands its "fair share" of sources). Additionally,

the colleges in the county are depended upon for Interlibrary Loan (especially the Berks Campus of Penn State), and use of microfilm and microfiche readers and printers: equipment often too costly or large for the Special Libraries.

It is not necessary to dwell upon the increased need for information that did indeed explode upon the scene at the end of the last decade - all of us are here for this reason. Thus, as the industries of Berks County grew, information Centers of varied sizes, budgets, resources and expertise appeared. Many of these centers or libraries were on a shoestring budget with staff of insufficient size or expertise to handle the demands immediately pressed upon them.

In 1966, several of the Information Centers/Libraries found an increasing need for information in addition to their specialized collections and, after discovering the use they could be to each other, looked at the idea of forming an information cooperative. These founders, one a professional librarian and the other, a literature chemist, with support from their parent organizations, designed a questionnaire to be sent out to Berks County industries known to have some kind of information resources. Of these fifteen questionnaires sent out in early 1967, thirteen were returned with a positive response. Additional support for the project was provided by a member of the Reading Chemists' Club which had, twenty years previously, published a listing of information sources of the area.[1] This valuable information and support enabled the budding network to set up an agenda for its first meeting in April 1967. At this first meeting, representatives from nine industrial resource centers attended.

The following framework for the new Special Libraries of Berks County network was established in May 1967:

I. Objectives

A. To aid members in the growing demand by business and industry in the obtaining of information often beyond the scope of individual holdings, thus increasing individual information resources.

B. To aid members in obtaining information more rapidly than through other channels.

1 The Reading Chemists Club Directory of Chemical Literature in Reading and Vicinity, Reading, Pa., 1946, 10 pp.

C. To aid members in gathering of information through personal contact via a published Directory of member names, affiliation, address and telephone number.

D. To increase members' expertise through informational programs.

II. Organization

A. Steering Committee

1. Three members to be elected by membership.
2. One new member to be elected to Committee every year to replace one outgoing.
3. A Chairman to be appointed each year.
4. The Chairman to last one year (his/her last year on Committee).

B. Corporate Membership

1. Originally limited to industrial and hospital representatives, but quickly broadened to include the college libraries.
2. Originally the Reading Public Library was made a member ex-officio. The ex-officio has since been dropped.

C. Dues

1. Originally assessed at $1/member. At this point, all member companies, hospitals, and colleges have provided mailing, meeting facilities, and programs at their expense.

E. Other Membership Requirements

1. To provide updated list of serials to all member libraries.
2. To provide photocopy and interlibrary loans (A.L.A. General Interlibrary Loan Code 1952, Rev. ed., 1956) under the following conditions:

-The needed material is out-of-print
-The urgent need of the materials precludes the normal acquisitions route
-The need for the material is "once and done" and does not justify acquisition
-The material is not of a proprietary nature

3. To provide interlibrary visits, providing such visits are agreed upon by the library to be visited.
4. To provide reference service under the following conditions:

   -Ready reference on short reference (5 minutes)
   -Place requestor in hands of another "contact"

F. Meetings

1. Three meetings to be held per year (Fall, Winter, Spring) at locations and on subjects to be decided upon at the planning meeting of the Steering Committee

To fully understand the success and growth of this network (18 members in 1967, 32 members in 1974), one must look at just who comprises this group. Only a small number of the members have graduate library degrees (although this seems to be rapidly changing), some have degrees in specific subject areas and several have no degree. Thus, we have come to look upon each other for help either outside of our specialized subject areas or within the area of library service itself. Programs planned by the Steering Committee have included subjects, such as general library methods; specific techniques; "tricks-of-the-trade;" equipment suppliers; outside information services. With no official charter, the network has had more freedom of movement in meeting objectives. To this point, no member has ever abused any of the privileges offered by membership, and the loose-knit effectiveness of the network has enabled members of parent organizations with various degrees of affluence and information center/library attitudes to make useful contributions. Included in Appendix A is a list of all organizational members of the Special Libraries of Berks County, which range in size from the smallest (Reider) to the largest (Gilbert Associates, Inc.). With this list, one can readily see what a large and necessary undertaking this network has been.

The following evaluation was made of the usefulness of the new network in the form of a questionnaire in 1968:

-90% of the membership responded
-50% and more had used their contacts often
-30% had used their contacts "once or twice"
-80% of the membership were enthusiastic about the future capabilities of the network

More current evaluations can be seen in the usually large turnout of members for meetings and the increase by 100% of the membership since 1967.

Included in Appendix B is a copy of the By-Laws of the Library Group of Southwestern Connecticut, Inc. Their network has roughtly the same membership as the Berks County network, but its parent organizations are far larger. Thus, for those of you already part of a larger group or contemplating such a venture, Appendix B may be of some help.

With the current economic situation in this country affecting almost all aspects of industrial life, one must surely reflect upon a network such as this. Already, various members have felt the "crunch" in decreased budgets, a moratorium on staffing and in some cases, an actual decrease in personnel. Thus, as the need for information services increases, the ability to provide these services either remains at a standstill or moves forward at a snail's pace. The demand for and the need of interlibrary cooperation must increase and the Special Libraries of Berks County is gearing itself to that end, again, through our personal contacts for resources and our planning for increasing our knowledge of new subject areas and information center/library techniques. A network such as the Special Libraries of Berks County (especially with limited dues and such an "esprit des corps") is ideally suited to the times that are upon us.

Appendix A

Special Libraries of Berks County Member Libraries:

Albright College
13th and Exeter Streets
Reading, Pa. 19604

Crompton & Knowles Corp.
Dyes & Chemicals Division
540 Pear Street
Reading, Pa. 19603

Alvernia College
Millmont, Pa. 19607

Bell Telephone Laboratories
2525 North 11th Street
Reading, Pa. 19604

Berks County Historical Society
940 Center Avenue
Reading, Pa. 19601

Berks County Law Library
Berks County Court House
Reading, Pa. 19601

Carpenter Technology Corp.
P. O. Box #662
Reading, Pa. 19603

Community General Hospital
145 North Sixth Street
Reading, Pa. 19601

Gilbert Associates, Inc.
525 Lancaster Avenue
Reading, Pa. 19602

The Glidden Company
Third and Bern Streets
Reading, Pa. 19601

G.P.U. Service Corporation
P. O. Box #1018
Reading, Pa. 19603

Holt Information Service
763 North 12th Street
Reading, Pa. 19604

Kawecki Berylco Industries
P. O. Box #60
Reading, Pa. 19603

Kutztown State College
Kutztown, Pa. 19530

Metropolitan Edison Company
2800 Pottsville Pike
Reading, Pa. 19605

Berks Campus
Pennsylvania State University
Tulpehocken Road
Reading, Pa. 19601

The Polymer Corporation
501 Crescent Avenue
Reading, Pa. 19603

Reading Eagle-Times
345 Penn Street
Reading, Pa. 19601

Reading Hospital
West Reading, Pa. 19602

Reading Area Community College
Freemont and Bruckman Avenues
Reading, Pa. 19605

Reading Public Library
Fifth and Franklin Streets
Reading, Pa. 19602

M. J. Reider Associates
107 Angelica Street
Reading, Pa. 19602

St. Joseph's Hospital
Birch and Walnut Streets
Reading, Pa. 19603

Tenneco Colors Division
Tenneco Chemicals, Inc.
12th and Bern Streets
Reading, Pa. 19604

Appendix A

Textile Machine Works Division
North American Rockwell Corp.
Box #1382
Reading, Pa. 19603

Wernersville State Hospital
Wernersville, Pa. 19565

Western Electric Company
P. O. Box #241
Reading, Pa. 19603

Appendix B

The Library Group of Southwestern Connecticut, Inc.:

Member Libraries

AMF, Inc.
American Can Company
American Cyanamid
Barnes Engineering
Bunker-Ramo Corp.
Burndy Corp.
CBS Laboratories
Clairol, Inc.
Continental Oil Co.
Darien Library
Dorr Oliver, Inc.
Fairfield County Law Library
Ferguson Library
Fleischmann Laboratories
Greenwich Library
Hooker Chemical Co.
ICI America, Inc.
Machlett Laboratories, Inc.
New Canaan Library
Norwalk Hospital
Norwalk State Technical College
Perkin-Elmer Corp.
Pitney-Bowes, Inc.
Polymer Industries, Inc.
South Norwalk Library
Stamford Hospital Medical Library
Stamford Law Library
University of Connecticut (Stamford Branch)
R. T. Vanderbilt Co., Inc.
J. M. Wright Technical School
Xerox Corp.
York Research Corp.

By-Laws

ARTICLE 1. NAME

The name of this organization shall be The Library Group of Southwestern Connecticut, Inc.

ARTICLE 2. PURPOSE

The purpose of this Group is to strengthen the business and technical literature resources of the community and to facilitate the exchange of these resources among the members. A further purpose is to promote a spirit of cooperation among the librarians employed within the community.

Appendix B

ARTICLE 3. MEMBERSHIP AND VOTING

1. REGULAR INDIVIDUAL MEMBERSHIP. Any individual who is employed in a library or information center in Southwestern Connecticut or who resides in Southwestern Coonecticut and is sympathetic to the purposes of the Group shall be entitled to Regular Membership. A Regular Member is entitled to one vote except with respect to matters involving the expenditure of funds collected from Corporate Membership dues for the Resources Account. He may, however, initiate discussion and enter debate on such matters.

2. SPECIAL MEMBERSHIP. Any public library; technical, vocation, or professional school library; public high school library; college or university library; or non-profit hospital library located in Southwestern Connecticut shall be entitled to Special Membership. A Special Membership library shall designate one representative to the Group who shall normally be the librarian or library director and who shall have the same voting privilege as a Regular Member. Any library with Special Membership may elect to become a Corporate Member by payment of corporate fees.

3. CORPORATE MEMBERSHIP. An industrial or business organization, association of professional personnel, research laboratory, labor union, or other organization which has a library or information center within Southwestern Connecticut, shall be entitled to Corporate Membership in the Group. The Corporate Member shall designate one representative to the Group, who shall normally be the librarian or information officer, and who shall have one vote. Only Corporate Members in good standing may vote to expend Resources Account Funds.

4. EMERITUS MEMBERSHIP. Anyone who has attained membership becomes eligible for Emeritus Membership upon retirement and has the rights and privileges of Regular Membership.

5. EX-OFFICIO MEMBERSHIP. Any state, regional or national committee or agency concerned with library problems and resources affecting our area, may apply for Ex-Officio Membership and delegate one representative who shall have no vote but may initiate discussion and enter into debate.

6. FOR THE PURPOSE OF THIS ARTICLE, Southwestern Connecticut may include the whole of Fairfield County, but more particularly shall include the towns of Greenwich, Stamford, Darien, New Canaan, Norwalk, Wilton, Ridgefield, and Westport.

ARTICLE 4. DUES

1. REGULAR MEMBERS shall pay dues of $5.00 per year which shall be allocated to the Operating Account for use by the Treasurer to defray the operating expenses of the Group.

Appendix B

2. The REPRESENTATIVE of a Special Membership library is not required to pay dues, but may elect Regular Membership.

3. CORPORATE MEMBERS shall pay dues of $50.00 per year of which $5.00 shall be considered to be the dues of the representative of the Corporate Member and allocated to the Operating Account, and $45.00 shall be allocated to the Resources Account.

4. EMERITUS MEMBERS shall pay no dues.

5. EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS shall pay no dues.

6. A NEW MEMBER who joins the Group on or after the first day of the seventh month of the fiscal year shall pay one-half the annual dues upon joining.

7. NON-PAYMENT OF DUES by Corporate or Regular Member within the calendar month following the start of the fiscal year shall result in loss of the privileges of membership. However, the member may be returned to good standing upon payment of dues for the then current full fiscal year.

ARTICLE 5. EXPENDITURES

1. Monies from the Operating Account, which consists of membership dues and special gifts, shall be used for current and non-recurring operating expenses. Expenditure from the Operating Account, within the recommendations of theBudget Committee, shall be approved by both the President and Treasurer, except that expenses exceeding $25.00 must be approved by a majority vote of the members at a quorum meeting.

2. Monies from the Resources Account, which consists of $45.00 annual allotment from each Corporate Membership, special gifts, monies transferred from the Operating Account, and from sale of resources owned by the Group, shall be disbursed after a 2/3 favorable written vote of the Corporate Members. Recommendations of the Resources Committee shall be approved by the Executive Committee and by a majority vote of the membership at a business meeting. These recommendations shall be listed on a ballot prepared by the Secretary for presentation to the Corporate Members. Ballots shall be returned to the Secretary within 30 days of date of mailing.

3. Corporate approval shall be obtained before orders are placed or commitments are made by the Resources Committee.

ARTICLE 6. OFFICERS

1. Officers and chairmen of standing committees must hold Regular Membership or be Corporate representatives.

2. The officers of this group shall consist of a President, Vice President who shall be the President Elect, a Corresponding Secretary, a Recording

Secretary, and a Treasurer. They shall perform the duties usually pertaining to their respective offices (as defined in the "Procedures Manual") and such additional duties as may be specified in these Bylaws.

ARTICLE 7. COMMITTEES

1. There shall be an Executive Committee consisting of the officers and the chairmen of the standing committees. The President shall have no vote in the Executive Committee unless necessary to break a tie.

2. The standing committees shall be the Program Committee and the Resources Committee. The chairmen of these committees shall select additional members of their committees at their own discretion.

3. The Program Committee shall arrange for speakers, panels, discussion groups, and the like, for the regularly scheduled meetings of the Group and for additional meetings at its discretion. The Program Committee is further responsible for all meeting arrangements except sending of the meeting notices.

4. The Resources Committee shall conduct surveys and make reports on the business and technical literature resources of the community and their availability to the members of the Group. It may recommend the purchase, placement, and disposal of literature forms and equipment for the use of these forms as may be needed to supplement and extend the existing resources. It shall be responsible for the maintenance and custody of materials so purchased. Funds for the purchase of these materials shall be obtained through corporate dues as described in Section 2 of Article 5.

5. The President shall have the power to appoint additional committees as they shall be found desirable.

ARTICLE 8. NOMINATIONS AND ELECTIONS

1. The Executive Committee shall, not later than March 15, appoint three members of the Group, none of whom shall be members of the Executive Committee, to serve as a Nominating Committee. The Nominating Committee shall select its own chairman, who shall present at the Annual Meeting a list of the offices to be filled and this committee's selections for each office. These offices shall include those named in Article 6 and the chairmen of the standing committees. Other nominations may be made from the floor.

2. The report of the Nominating Committee and the lection of officers and committee chairmen shall be, respectively, the next-to-last and last items of business at the Annual Meeting, and those elected shall assume their offices forthwith.

3. No proxy shall be recognized.

ARTICLE 9. FISCAL YEAR

1. The fiscal year for the Group shall run from May 1 through April 30.

ARTICLE 10. MEETINGS

1. There shall be regular meetings of the Group to be held on or as close as possible to the second Tuesday of February, April, September, and December. The April meeting shall be the Annual Meeting. There shall be such additional meetings as may be arranged by the Program Committee or called by the President.

2. Upon the written request of five members, the President shall call a special meeting at such time as they request.

ARTICLE 11. QUORUM

1. A quorum for the transaction of ordinary business by the Group shall be 20% of the membership. A majority vote of those voting shall prevail.

2. A quorum for the discussion of business involving Resources Account funds shall be 20% of the Corporate Members. A 2/3 written affirmative vote of Corporate Members is the quorum necessary for expenditure of Resources funds.

3. A quorum of the Executive Committee shall be four members thereof.

ARTICLE 12. VACANCIES

1. Should any office become vacant, the Executive Committee shall fill the vacancy by appointment for the balance of the term.

ARTICLE 13. DISSOLUTION

1. In the event of the dissolution of the Group, the Executive Committee and the Resources Committee shall jointly determine, in accordance with the first-named purpose set forth in Article 2, the disposition of the physical assets of the Group or the proceeds resulting from their sale.

2. The Executive Committee shall distribute among the Special Membership Libraries any remaining funds in the treasury with the stipulation that they be used to further the first-named purpose in Article 2.

ARTICLE 14. AMENDMENTS

1. These Bylaws may be amended or revised by any meeting duly called under the provisions of Article 10 by a two-thirds vote of the members present, provided that the call of the meeting shall include a statement of the proposed amendment or revisions. These Bylaws and all amendments or revisions thereto shall take effect immediately upon adoption.

Brackets are used to clarify the passage in Article 6 as discussed by the quorum meeting.

Accepted April 30, 1969